1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

Each member of this small community knows every other member well, his virtues, his faults, his little foibles and idiosyncrasies, and it is within these groups that one finds the choicest bits of gossip. Every native is identified with a certain hamlet as well as village. Thus, he is a man from Penguli, or Ponembatawa, as well as a member of the village of Lesu. His deepest roots are in the hamlet, and when he dies it is to the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born that he is brought to be buried. As matrilocal residence is the rule, a man is frequently buried in a hamlet other than that in which he was living.[1]

The next smallest grouping according to locality is the household, which corresponds, in general, to the individual family, consisting of parents and children. Should a man have two wives, each wife will usually have her own house, although if there is a great difference in their ages, one being very old and decrepit, they frequently occupy the same house. The unmarried men and the boys, after the age of nine or ten, sleep in the men's house. There is no girls' house corresponding to the men's house, and the girls sleep at home until they are married. The usual occupants of each house are thus, the husband and wife, the female unmarried children, and young male children. But even though the older boys may sleep at the men's house, they participate in the life of the household. Just as each hamlet

[1] In the past, before white contact, the hamlets of Lesu formed two villages. The present six hamlets at the northern end (Simbelmalum, Ponamsambuat, Ponembwam, Ponembatawa, Ponmeniliasau, and Ponatlege) were known as the village of Tagam, and the remaining nine hamlets (Onel, Panat, Logok, Pantes, Penguli, Tarengam, Pencil, Sapone, Penbumbu) were the Lesu village. Each had their own chief, and there was constant fighting caused by thefts of women and pigs between the two villages. While war has been abolished and the two villages are now united, a certain division is still maintained between them. For instance, the boys of Tagam are still circumcised separately from the boys of Lesu. The members of the two places attend each other's rites, but there is no really close intimacy between them.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

775 vague unknown manner after the individual dies. In this way the Melanesian meets the eternal problem centred around the fear of oblivion at death. The same Melanesian constructs no theory of rewards and punishments in after life. For these he quite consciously finds in this life in the acquirement or non-acquirement of prestige. However, the magical spells give some evidence that there may have been in the past a more coherent theory of after life which has since been lost. At least this is one of many possibilities. In the war and fishing magic particularly there are invocations to the ghosts of dead clan relatives to assist in fishing and in weakening the enemy. As if to reward or pay back the same ghosts after a fishing expedition, some taro and fish are left in the *liga* for them. The smallness of the quantity left makes the act an obviously symbolic one. From the magic it would therefore seem that the Lesu man believes that the ghosts of his clan members live on indefinitely, and are able and willing to assist him if properly invoked. Whether this is a remnant of an ancient ancestor cult cannot be determined from the present evidence. Mortuary rites, which would be expected to throw some light on this problem, give no help. For, to-day at least, the mortuary rites have no effect on the dead man, his ghost, his double, *gas*, or anything connected with him. They are held to gain prestige for the living survivors who make them.

MORTUARY RITES

164 These mortuary rites are no more religious than the rites on the occasions of birth, circumcision, first menses, marriage, and death. They have certain essentials, the dance and the feast, in common, and the same mental attitude underlies them all. They are, therefore, all religious in an equal degree, but since all except the mortuary rites have been described in another context only the latter are given here.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

The death of Maling, an old woman, was not unexpected. She had been ill for a long time, and her daughter, Tubung, had been affectionately taking care of her. Her husband was already dead, and so was her son. Her sister's daughter's son, Soles, and her mother's brother's daughter's husband, Malalis, are the leading men of her clan. Because her death was expected any moment, Soles went to Ambwa, known for its good fishing, to make arrangements for securing a large catch of fish for the expected mortuary rites. The next day, in the middle of the afternoon Maling died, and immediately the wails were heard. Her daughter, Tubung, Soles, and Malalis led in the wailing, but soon they were joined by everyone in the hamlet and immediate community. The news of the death spread rapidly, and members of Maling's clan, many of them with their families, began arriving on the scene; the wails swelled in volume. In the meantime Maling's body was carried by Hawk women to the sea and washed. Maling was a member of the Eagle moiety, and the washing is always done by a member of the opposite moiety and the same sex. After the washing the same women put the corpse into a coffin, made of an old canoe with the pointed ends removed and a flat board put in their place, which was then placed in a room of the daughter's house. This house has two rooms, and the outer wall of the one in which the corpse was placed was removed, thus leaving it exposed to the compound. The women went to Tubung's garden and got taro, which they then piled on each side and in front of the coffin. Leaves were also stuck in with the taro. In front of the coffin was the bamboo *bäk*, a structure in which the corpse is supposed to rest, but which is not functioning. The relatives and other members of the community came and wailed over the coffin, but Tubung and Soles wailed the most continuously.

At nightfall the women of the village danced, while some of them beat out the rhythm on drums. The men looked

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

on. This was kept up all night. In the morning the women went again to the gardens and brought in more taro, while women from other villages arrived, also carrying taro, which they hung on bamboo poles fastened between trees. In the afternoon the women were busy scraping the taro and preparing it to be baked in the *liga*, while the men singed pigs, wrapped the fish in leaves, and did their share in the preparations for the feast which would take place tomorrow. The wailing continued at the same time. In charge of these preparations were Soles and Malalis.

That night the men danced. About fifty of them, decorated with leaves and carrying spears which are longer than they are, circled around the fire. To the music of the drums, they continued their dancing during the night. When one group stopped, another began. The dances were mostly of the abstract and rather intricate, circle, square, and line formation. One group had their bodies painted with white powdered lime, leaves stuck behind as if they were tails, and as they danced rhythmically shook the shell rattles they carried in their hands. Hour after hour they went on. The men and women in the "audience" sat separately and watched them. When the dancers appeared to lag, Tubung, the daughter of the dead woman, stood up, and holding a torch cried out that on the morrow they would receive tobacco. At daybreak they stopped. There was a little rest before the dead woman was carried into the cemetery. About the middle of the morning a group of twenty women of the Hawk moiety, their hair decorated with leaves, entered the compound singing. Tubung was wailing over the body of her dead mother. The group of women advanced in block formation to the coffin, and lifting it to their shoulders carried it into the cemetery. Tubung walked behind wailing. They deposited the coffin by the open grave which had previously been dug. The women immediately left the cemetery and stood weeping near the entrance. The men entered,

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

and the body was rather quickly buried, without any special ceremony. Now the men sat around outside in front of the men's house and engaged in desultory conversation. Baked pigs and bundles of taro in the meantime were being carried into the cemetery. Here at one end and by the coffin was the *Warawara malanggan*, made yesterday. In the centre was the large breast ornament, *kepkep*, and around it was an intricate weaving of different-coloured leaves. The two baked pigs wrapped in leaves were placed in front of the *malanggan*, and twelve bundles of baked taro in front of them. On one side is the *kolamuth*, which is beaten as the men file into the cemetery. Malalis now opens the bundles of food and directs their distribution. Ongas and Sola, both sons of the dead woman's sister's daughter, cut the pigs. Fifteen men acting as "waiters" advance together, lift up the baked taro, and put it one at a time on the leaf plates, making the action completely uniform. When they finish they return and in a similar way distribute more taro. In the same manner they divided the two pigs which have been cut up. Each portion of food, divided between two or three people, consisted of about fifteen halves of taro and a rather large piece of pig, perhaps three or four pounds. No one ate until the distribution had been finished. Then they began, but Malalis and Soles and Ongas and one or two other clan relatives refrained from eating. When they finished, the men carried the remains of their food in baskets, made from the coconut leaf, out into the compound where the women were sitting. Here also were thirteen more pigs, singed but not baked, and uncooked taro. Malalis, assisted by Soles, Ongas, and others, distributed this taro to the women, of whom there were about eighty present. Then came the payments for pigs and services. Tubung, Malalis, Soles, Ongas, and the other clan relatives sat down and counted the *tsera*, which they took from several baskets. Soles stood up, and holding up

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

764 each piece separately, said to whom and for what it was
431 being paid. All the *tsera* was contributed by Maling's clan relatives, about twelve of them, the largest amount coming from Soles and Malalis. First, the people from whom the pigs have been bought were paid, then the pall-bearers, and then the dancers. Tobacco and food formed the payment to the two latter groups. Then there were gifts of portions of pigs by the owners, Maling's clan relatives, who have purchased them for the occasion, and which form part of a long chain of economic transactions, consisting of exchange gifts, already described in the section under economic structure. Finally all the gifts were made, the rites were over, and everyone returned wearily to their homes.

765 For several weeks now all the women of the hamlet (this included the members of the extended family) slept in Tubung's house and the men at the men's house. There [834] was an abstention from sexual intercourse at this time. During the day the ordinary family life was interrupted. The men spent most of their time sitting in the cemetery, and talked about any matter that happened to be of immediate interest. The women were together, busy much of the time with communal preparations of the meals, which the men ate in the cemetery and the women in the compound. [262] During this time Tubung, the daughter of the dead woman, refrained from eating taro. This taboo is kept by parents and children, brothers and sisters, and husband or wife, should they be alive. During this same period dance rehearsals, which happened to have been begun before the death, were discontinued by everyone in the village. The end of the period was marked by a feast given by Soles, who hit a baked pig on the back.

764 The mortuary rites for Maling are typical. In illness it is usually a daughter or parent who takes care of the sick person. At Maling's death the behaviour of a husband

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

could not be observed, because he was already dead. But when alive the husband or wife plays the part of a chief mourner, and is the loudest and most constant of all in his wailing. But the mate never takes any responsibility for the rites. A clan relative—a son (if the dead person is a woman), a maternal uncle, a sister's son, etc.—is the one who acts as the executive, and who, with the assistance of the other members of his clan, finances the rites. But the mate obeys the food and sex taboos along with the clan relatives. It is only in the accepting of responsibility that he is relegated to the background.

The rites for Maling were more elaborate than they are for a younger person. For the number of people, the size of the feast, and in general the elaborateness of the rites, are correlated to the prestige of the dead person. And in Lesu it is only an old person who can attain prestige. No matter how strong a personality, how much intelligence, skill, or wealth a man may have, he cannot attain the heights of prestige or become a real leader until he reaches old age. The mortuary rites are graduated nicely to fit the degree of prestige. For instance, if an infant is born dead, there are no rites at all, and the body is buried immediately without feast or wailing. A young child's funeral takes place on the day of death, and is attended only by people of the neighbouring hamlets. The funeral of a middle-aged person is held the day after death, and is attended by all the village and by his clan relatives from other villages. It is only when a very old person dies that the rites become an inter-village affair, and that relatives come from far-distant settlements. Then it is that the body is held for several days, while elaborate dances are performed and a large quantity of food is collected. Thus the social position of the dead person is shown at his death, and the rites become a kind of climax, big or small as the case may be, for his life.

The rites also contribute to the prestige of the living.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

Should they not be held in appropriate fashion, those responsible will be the objects of gossip, and will fall in the esteem of their neighbours and friends, than which nothing worse can be imagined for the Lesu man or woman.

Another function of the mortuary ritual is that it provides an outlet for the emotions of the survivors. The chief mourners, the immediate family, and the mate wail long and loudly, and their wailing is brought to a ritualistic climax by the more perfunctory wails of the rest of the community. Dancing is another outlet also participated in by the whole community. Also, if besides grief over the loss of a dear relative the survivors feel sorrow due to the economic loss of one member of their clan or community, they express it quite openly. If an industrious and hard-working member of the community dies before he reaches old age, the economic loss is commented upon quite openly. One man was in a positive grouch over the death of a young man who was his maternal nephew. This meant one less person in the clan, already very small, to assist in the clan rites. When Kawitti, a middle-aged woman and industrious worker, died, all the women of the community openly lamented the loss of a worker for their communal food preparations.

Besides wailing, sorrow is also expressed in a negative manner. The immediate family refrains from the eating of the most common of foods, taro, for a certain period; and in the same way the more extended family (the immediate family and their mates) do not have sexual intercourse during this period of mourning. Similarly, the whole village refrains from having dance rehearsals. The rites thus differentiate the mourners according to their kinship to the dead person, and provide positive and negative outlets for their grief.[1]

[1] The mortuary rites have already been described in slightly more detail in the author's article, "Mortuary Rites in New Ireland," *Oceania*, September 1931.

2:Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

and is divided into hamlets. The village of Lesu, where the writer lived, has 222 inhabitants living in fifteen hamlets. Each hamlet has its own cemetery and every native wants to be buried in the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born.

Only the death of a very old person is considered normal. When a native who is not old dies (*i.e.*, one still able to work), his death is usually attributed to black magic. The rites are similar for all deaths, but at the death of an old person they are the most elaborate. The number of people at a funeral, the size of the feast, the elaborateness of the rites, are all graduated nicely to the age of the dead person.[2] If an infant is born dead there are no rites at all. It is buried immediately without feast or wailing. The funeral of a child takes place on the day of the death and is attended only by the people of the neighbouring hamlets. The funeral of a mature person, but not a very old one, will be held the day after death and will be a village affair, with some members of neighbouring villages there. The funeral of a very old person is a large inter-village affair, many people coming from quite distant settlements, and the body will be kept for two or three days before burial. The pattern at death is the same as it is during life. It is the old men and women who are the most important people and who are the leaders of the community.

While alive each person has a double called a *gas* which lives on the ground belonging to his totemic clan.[3] This *gas* is not seen by its living double, although there are rare occasions mentioned in folk tales when a man has met his *gas*. When a person dies his *gas* dies too. At the time of death there issues from the dying man, with his last breath, his *tinuato* or ghost, which has no connection with the *gas*. The *tinuato* dwells in the body while the native is alive and comes out only at his death, while the *gas* always dwells outside on the clan land and dies when the person dies. The *tinuato* or ghost continues to live, but its place of existence and manner of living are very vague. It belongs to the realm of the supernatural, about which no questions are asked. For a month or so after death

[2] Cf. Camilla H. Wedgwood, Death and Social Status in Melanesia, *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LVII.

[3] *Vide* the writer's Report on Research in New Ireland, *Oceania*, I, 1931, 357.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

the *tinuato* wanders around near the place of death and makes its presence known by a low whistle. Although it has no malignant qualities, it is regarded with great fear.

There is no belief in life after death (except for the ghost), in rewards or punishments, or in any deity. It is interesting to observe that for the missionised native it is the *tinuato* which goes to hell, and it is this also which has become the Christian soul.

These people, until very recently, were cannibals. All the adults of the community in which I lived had been cannibals before the white government stopped the practice. But it was only the bodies of enemies killed in warfare which were eaten, and never the body of a friend, relative, or member of the same village. As far as could be ascertained, there was no theory of imbibing the strength of the enemy warrior. It was merely another meat dish in a diet which was mostly vegetable.[4]

Cremation rather than burial was formerly practised, but as far as could be learned there has been no change in the rites. In the past the body was burned and the bones buried. The cemeteries existed then just as they do to-day—each hamlet with its own. In the rites to-day cremation is simply omitted and the whole body is buried instead of just the bones, as in the past.[5]

The following description, covering the three chronological periods, brings out the divisions among the survivors who are grouped according to their kinship to the dead person, their degree of mourning and their responsibility for the rites.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE DEATH

In the period immediately preceding death there is even then a selection of certain relatives who will perform special duties towards the dying person. It is always the parents or children who take care of the sick person. Before death occurs, it is to the house of the parents or children that the patient is moved. The spouse is very attentive also, and the rest of the community show their interest by cooking in the hamlet of the sick person and by dis-

[4] However, one can never completely trust information gathered from hearsay only, and with no opportunity to observe the phenomenon itself.

[5] White control is responsible for the change.

2:Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30);1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

continuing dance rehearsals. A woman just past middle age named Kawitti died rather unexpectedly. The night before her death she left her husband's house and went to her sister's son's house close by. Her own son was away at a distant village. Two other old women, one of whom did die, while the other recovered, went immediately to the houses of their respective daughters. Two younger women who were very ill went to their respective mother's house. In each case the mother or the daughter affectionately cared for the sick person. But this did not prevent the husband of a sick woman from being attentive also. When Pulong was ill her husband roamed the bush looking for delicacies such as sugar cane, or made a new bamboo bed for her, or supported her while she sat up. When Nunda, an old woman, was ill and expected to die all the women of the neighbouring hamlets brought their cooking to the compound in front of the house where she was lying. The night before the death of a young man, Waketei, the women of the village did not have their dance rehearsal, which had been held nightly for the past month. In one case, that of the death of the old woman, Maling, preparations for the mortuary feast were begun before she actually died. Her grandson in the female line went to a nearby village where the fishing was very good and made arrangements to secure a large catch for the expected mortuary feast.

BURIAL

Immediately the death occurs the rites begin in earnest. Wailing starts at the moment life leaves the body. While everyone in the community wails, there is a difference in the intensity and duration of their wailing. The consort, the parents, the children are the chief mourners and wail the most. Next come the other clan relatives, and after them the rest of the village.[6]

The wailing is interrupted by the carrying of the corpse to the sea to be washed. This is always done by people of the same sex

[6]Should the children be absent at the time of the death, they return with all possible haste. The members of the same clan as the dead native will travel (walk) to distant villages for the funeral, sometimes as much as thirty or forty miles. Their consorts frequently accompany them, but it is always clear that these are in the position of satellites.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

and opposite moiety, *i.e.*, an "Eagle" woman would be washed by a "Hawk" woman, and vice versa. The same people then carry the corpse (male or female) to the men's house, or to the house where the person had formerly lived. In discussing the matter, a native will tell you that the custom is to take the corpse to the men's house, but as a matter of actual practice the writer observed that it was more often brought back to its former house, or, in the case of an old woman, to a daughter's house. The corpse is clothed in its loin cloth (this of course is an innovation, the loin cloth having been introduced by the whites) and set upon a bamboo structure called *bāk*,[7] in the doorway of the house. The corpse is propped up on this structure and the only native explanation is that this is something to hold the body over which the mourners will wail. At most of the funerals witnessed the *bāk* was there, but not functioning. Instead, the corpse was lying inside the house on the usual bamboo bed. The reason given for not using the *bāk* was that the corpse could not be made to sit upon it—the legs were too swollen, or some other similar reason. As soon as the body has been set upon its *bāk*, or bier, wailing is continued. By this time the people from hamlets near by have arrived, and soon those from the distant part of the village have come also. Word is immediately carried to the neighbouring villages and from these come in particular the clan relatives of the dead person. The wailing is kept up almost continuously day and night, until the body is buried. This period may be from one to three days, depending upon the age and prestige of the person who has died. During this interval preparations for the burial feast are in progress and naturally the longer the interval the more food can be collected and prepared.

The women go to the gardens and bring in the taro and then begin the work of scraping it and preparing it to be baked. Sometimes one sees the women scraping the taro and wailing at the same time. The men, in the meantime, are bringing in firewood, tending the *viga* (the pile of hot stones in which the food is baked), or are concerned with cooking pigs or fish. The actual direction of the preparations for the feast is in the hands of a clan relative—

[7] *ā* as in hat.

2:Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

a son or daughter, a nephew or uncle, on the mother's side, or a mother. The consort during this period is spending all his time wailing, and not taking any part in the actual preparations.

During this interval between death and burial there is a fairly large group of people assembled at the hamlet where the death occurred. All the clan relatives and their consorts—the extended family—and sometimes a few others are there. At night the sexes sleep separately. All the women sleep in one house and all the men in another, or perhaps the men sleep out of doors in a compound in front of a house. There is abstention from all sexual relations.

If the funeral is that of a very old person and the rites are being carried out in full detail dancing is part of the ceremonial. At the funeral of an old and important woman, Maling (her sister's son was a chief), there was dancing on the two nights which elapsed between the time of death and the burial. Maling died early in the day and that night all the women of the village and the neighbouring villages danced. The next night the men of the village and of neighbouring villages danced. On the following morning the corpse was buried. Each night dancing went on continuously until sunrise. Different groups danced, so that no one person danced all night long. The whole community (the village and neighbouring ones) was present as an audience. If the energy of the dancers appeared to flag, the daughter of the dead woman exhorted them to continue with promises of the payment which would later be made to them. The dances were the traditional ones used on all ritual occasions, and participants were members of the community, regardless of their kinship to the dead person. Dancing is a part of the rites only when the dead person is very old.

The actual burial, however, does not vary very much according to the age of the dead person. Some time in the interval preceding burial the corpse is put in its coffin, usually an old canoe with the pointed ends removed. Members of the opposite moiety carry the corpse from the house in which it has been resting into the cemetery. They are decorated with leaves and white lime is used as a facial adornment. These pall-bearers advance in a square formation, singing, lift up the corpse, circle around the compound two or three times with it and finally carry it into the cemetery. At the same

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

764 time the wailing reaches its climax. Everyone wails, but the chief
[152] mourner—the consort, parent, child, sister, or brother, as the case may be—clings to the head of the corpse and wails more intensely than the others. Ridae, the widow of Wakatai, alternately waved her arms, wrung her hands, clasped the breast of the corpse and wailed, asking dramatically between the wails what was to become of her now. At another funeral, Lungam, the husband of Kawitti, behaved similarly. They follow the coffin into the cemetery, the wailing becoming louder as it is lowered into a shallow grave. As the loose ground is thrown over the grave and the coffin is covered, the wails are particularly shrill. Finally, when the grave is completely covered over, the wailing ceases, and if the chief mourner is a woman she leaves the cemetery. If a man, he remains where he is.

[152] Now comes the feast. The climax of wailing and outburst of emotions is followed by quiet and calm. Outside the cemetery the women sit and casually chat and laugh and louse one another, or perhaps munch a taro. It is difficult to realize that these are the same people who fifteen minutes before were the participants in an intense emotional scene. Inside the cemetery, where the men are gathered, there is the same tranquillity. The baked taro and pig are distributed in the usual manner.[8] The man who is responsible for giving the feast, a son or maternal nephew or maternal uncle, makes a short speech to the effect that this feast is being held for the person who just died. Then the men eat. They appear quite cheerful and there is nothing subdued or sad about the gathering. The only thing that marks it from a feast not held at the time of the burial is that a few of the men may be so tired that they are asleep on the sand just outside the cemetery and a few people present in the cemetery are not eating at all. These are the husband, brother, maternal nephew, and perhaps a brother's son (all clan relatives with the exception of the husband).

764 As soon as the burial feast is over the men come out of the
614 cemetery, and there in the compound, where the women are present,
437

[8]For a more detailed description of the feasts see the writer's article, Feasts in New Ireland, *American Anthropologist* (in press).

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10+
Lesu

the payments are ritually made to the owners of the pigs which were consumed at the feast, to the dancers, and to those who carried the corpse to the grave. In each case it is a close clan relative, a son, or mother's sister's son, a mother, or a mother's brother who makes the payments. It is never the surviving consort. While one person, such as a son, is considered responsible for the feast, he is assisted by other members of his clan (which is the same as that of the dead person). At the funeral of the old woman, Maling, there were fifteen pigs, all contributed, or rather paid for, by the members of her clan. Her mother's sister's son contributed three, and each one of the other clan relatives one. Most of these pigs were purchased from other people, regardless of clan or moiety, and it was to these people that the payments were made. The man making the payment held up a piece of *tsera* (shell currency) and called out the name of the man or woman to whom he was paying it and mentioned also what the payment was for. At another funeral there were ten pigs and a total payment of 39 *tsera* made for them, 32 out of the 39 being paid by clan relatives of the dead person. The remaining 7 were paid by the following three people, her husband, the chief (whose father was of the same clan as the dead woman), and another man who was of the same moiety, but of a different clan from the dead woman. This man was unmarried and most of his clan relatives were dead. He was a classificatory brother of the dead woman and she had frequently given him food. His contribution now of two *tsera* for a small pig was considered as a reciprocal gift to her. The general rule is that clan relatives pay for all the pigs and services. The exceptions just noted merely indicate that this primitive society is, like all societies, flexible in carrying out its rules.

The officiating clan relative also makes the payment to the dancers and pall-bearers.

The taro for the feast is contributed by all the women of the hamlet and the neighbouring hamlets, the clan relatives bringing a little bit more than the others, but in the matter of taro there is no fine distinction drawn as in the case of payment for pigs. Every woman brings the taro from her garden, and it involves no question of payment. Taro is never sold on any occasion, but pigs are a common object of trade.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

764 614 The payments for the pigs and services show very plainly that it is the clan relatives who are responsible for carrying out the mortuary rites. It is an economic matter and they are the ones who are under an obligation to make the payments. There are fewer exceptions to this rule than almost any other. When Kawitti died her son was absent at a distant village. There was no maternal nephew present either, and she had no daughter. She was survived by a husband, who, in the absence of a clan relative, made a very small burial feast. It was explained at the feast that it was a very small one and that as soon as the son came home he would make a big feast. Eleven days later the son returned, having walked from a far distant village, and after he finished wailing, he immediately began preparations for a really big feast. These preparations took about a week, at the end of which there was a large feast attended by over a hundred people. It was the son who officiated at the feast and who, assisted by his clan relatives, made the necessary payments. The husband of the dead woman was completely in the background.

538 764 614 The ending of the majority of folk tales and myths is also rather interesting, in showing the economic responsibility of the clan relatives for the mortuary rites. An overwhelming number of the folk tales end with the death of one or more of the main characters. The tales all conclude on exactly the same note, " The man died and then all the clan relatives held a pig and made a feast."[29]

RITES AFTER BURIAL

765 The rites after burial may be divided into two parts, those occurring in the period immediately after death (the first month) and those in the succeeding period, which extends to an indefinite number of years.

765 513 834 The sleeping arrangements and taboo on sexual intercourse for the extended family, which began during the burial rites, are continued in this first period. The men sleep in one house, frequently the men's house, and all the women sleep in another house, sometimes

[29] " Holding a pig " refers to holding it just before it is killed.

2:Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

have no effect on the *tinuato* (ghost), the *gas* (double), or anything connected with the dead person. The rites, while nominally carried out in honour of the dead person, seem to have as their real function to increase the prestige of the survivor. Over and over again I was told that if the *malaŋgon* was not made, the clan relative who should have made it would fall in prestige, that he would be the object of much gossip, and that everyone would say that he did not have sufficient wealth to make one. Nothing more hurtful to a native's prestige than this could be said.[12]

Besides the *malaŋgon* feasts there are many other feasts given after death over an indefinite period of years. They are made usually by one of the relatives of the extended family who observed the sleeping or sexual taboos immediately after death. The maternal nephew and the son, if the dead person is a woman, are the most frequent givers of these feasts. Many other feasts, which have an obvious purpose not connected with death, are held in the cemetery and are considered in some way not very clear to me to be for all the dead buried in that cemetery. A feast given on the occasion of a child having its first tooth, or one held simply because there is plenty of food, will be held in the cemetery and is considered in some subtle manner to be held for the dead buried there as well as for the explicit reason given.

To summarize the description of the rites, it has been shown that the chief mourners are the parents, children, and the consort. Next come the other clan relatives and after them the rest of the community. The direction of the rites and economic responsibility for them is in the hands of a close clan relative, the spouse taking no active part at all. Those observing the food taboos are the same close clan relatives and also the spouse. The sexual taboo involves a larger group, the whole extended family. Intimate duties connected with the corpse, such as washing and carrying it to the cemetery, are performed by people of the opposite moiety, who are not kindred to the dead person, and therefore not chief mourners.

[12]The subject of the *malaŋgon* is a complicated one and a monograph might be written on this alone. The writer will present material in another context.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

chatter, the telling of jokes, and the rather casual happy atmosphere which always accompanies communal cooking.[13]

During the burial rites there is no evidence of fear. The dominant emotion is sorrow, felt in varying degrees by the survivors and expressed in wailing. The spouse and clan relatives seem to show a real personal grief based on love and affection for the dead person. But the way in which some of the other members of the community turn from dramatic wailing to joking conversation would indicate that their sorrow cannot be very deep. At one funeral a group of five or six men, not clan relatives, came out of the house where they had been loudly wailing over the corpse and almost immediately burst into boisterous laughter because a bamboo bench on which they had been sitting tilted slightly. There appeared to be no feeling that the laughter following the wailing was out of place. Frequently, conversation of the non-clan relatives immediately following their wailing would be light and amusing. As a rule this did not hold for the consort. He or she generally wailed continuously, stopping only for the necessary rest, without any light interludes. But there was the usual exception. One widow after a most prolonged and dramatic outburst of wailing, five minutes later turned to a few other women and made a joking remark, which had no connection with the death. There were no comments on this behaviour, but later she was an object of unfavourable gossip, because she resumed sexual relations with a second husband too soon after her first husband's death.

If the deceased is not old, *i.e.*, if he was an active member of the community at the time of his death, there is another element in the sorrow besides grief over the loss of a dear friend or relative.

[13] I was unable to get much information on the attitude of the dying person towards death. It so happened that in those cases where I was able to be present before the death occurred, the dying person was either unconscious, or too ill to talk, or to be bothered by an ethnologist's questions. However, as far as I could gather, there is a reluctance to die. This was seen quite clearly when a middle aged woman who had been ill and expected to die, recovered. Her happiness in her recovery, her renewed interest in life, showed that she was very glad to be still living. Natives in good health mention that they will die simply as a fact that is bound to occur some time. Frequently in working with informants on the subject of inheritance of property, they would say casually to illustrate a point, " When I die, this and this will be inherited by . . . etc."

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

after Kawitti's death the chief, Ongas, one of those observing sleeping taboos, started off to another village about four miles away to see a relative. He returned in about half an hour, very much out of breath and quite scared because he had heard a low whistle, which he believed indicated the presence of Kawitti's ghost. He hurried home and did not leave the hamlet for several days. The fear is particularly active for several months after death and then diminishes, to be replaced by the fear of the ghost of the next person who dies. The ghost is never laid and the fear never completely absent. However, no emotion can persist with the same degree of intensity over any long period of time, and as the grief is spent and new interests come up, the fear of the ghost is put in the background. The situation which called up the ghost has been taken care of by certain rites and no longer exists. As the situation is shelved, so too is the ghost which accompanies it, even though there were no definite rites to accomplish this.[14]

THE FUNCTION OF RITES

The mortuary rites have a double function. They serve both to differentiate the groups of survivors and to provide a means of expression for their emotions. The various taboos set off one group of mourners from another and from the rest of the community. Food taboos set apart the chief mourners—the immediate family—from the others, and in the same way the sleeping customs and sexual taboos involved set off the extended family from the rest of the community. The taboo on dance rehearsals after the burial applies to the whole community. The importance of the taboo is in proportion to the degree of grief experienced by the survivors. It is obvious that food and sex are of more significance than dance rehearsals. Abstinence from eating taro and from sexual inter-

[14] An interesting psychoanalytic interpretation of the ghost has been suggested by Dr. George Daniels, to whom I am indebted for reading the manuscript and making several suggestions. The ambivalence of any close attachment is well known, *i.e.*, both love and hate would be a part of any deep attachment. In order to break the attachment both these emotional attitudes have to be detached from the object. The first (love) comes out in grief. The negative feeling comes out after the discharge of grief in the ritualistic mourning, in the form of fear, or a projection of their own feeling of guilt on account of the ambivalence of their attitude.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

182 764

course is practised only by the chief mourners and closest relatives, while everyone refrains from the dance rehearsals.

Turning to the second function—the ritual expression of emotion, we find these emotions to be, (a) sorrow over the loss of a close relative or friend, (b) sorrow due to economic loss, if the person is young, (c) fear of a ghost after the burial rites. The mourners may be classified according to the depth of their emotions. The parents, children, spouse, and close clan relatives grieve most intensely and the degree of wailing is consistent with the blood relationship of the survivor to the corpse. The exception is the spouse, who is not kin to the dead person, but is a member of the opposite moiety. Here the natural ties of affection are fully recognized, even though he is not a clan relative. But while it is appreciated that his sorrow may be deep, he is never classed with the clan relatives. His loss can be replaced, and everyone knows that after a decent interval he will take another wife. The loss of a member to the clan, however, cannot be replaced.

It is the clan relatives who bear the economic responsibility for the rites and who in so doing acquire additional prestige. This [181] society is almost completely motivated by a desire for prestige, and the acquisition of it might well be regarded as partial compensation for the loss of the dead clan relative.

The chief mourners express their sorrow in wailing, their economic loss quite openly through bad temper and conversation, and the clan mourners receive a certain amount of compensation through increasing their prestige by giving feasts, making a *malaŋgon*, etc. The chief mourners also express their grief negatively by refraining, for about a month, from two of the most common acts of their daily life, eating taro and having sexual intercourse.

The survivors who are less deeply touched by the death, *i.e.*, the rest of the community outside of the clan relatives and consort, also wail, but their wailing is not prolonged and, in Biblical phrase, is more "weeping with those that weep." Their mourning seems to be somewhat in deference to those most bereaved and to allow the feelings of these to come to the climax at a ritualistic exhibition. It is they who spare the chief mourners the duty of washing the the corpse and lowering it into the grave.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

The ritual for expressing grief might be said to be exceptionally well adapted for the release of the emotion aroused by death. And the emotion is soon spent. There is no sorrowful brooding. The *malaŋgon* rites may be carried out years after the death, but they are not done in the spirit of sorrowful mourning for the dead, but to get prestige for the living. The rites might be termed a hygienic method for handling certain psychological tensions caused by death.

HORTENSE POWDERMAKER

5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

Around food also is focused much of the prestige of an individual in his family. Here a man's standing is largely dependent upon his ability as a food provider and the woman's upon her industry in preparing the food. Failure on the part of either partner to fulfill these obligations is sufficient cause for a divorce.

Social Organization

Before describing the feasts and showing the way in which much of life centers around food, it is necessary to give a very brief description of the essentials of the social organization. There are two exogamous moieties, the Eagle and the Hawk, which are subdivided into clans. Descent is matrilineal, the clan consisting of an extended family, all related through the female line. The next kinship unit in order of size is the individual family, which may be monogamous, is frequently polygamous, and occasionally polyandric.

On the basis of locality the largest unit is the village. In the district where I lived there are five villages forming one linguistic unit. This is not and never has been, as far as I could observe, a political unit. In the past, warfare was frequent between the villages and there neither was nor is one chief for all of them, each having its own. The village is subdivided into hamlets,—Lesu into fifteen. Residence is matrilocal and so a hamlet will usually have many female members of the same clan. The hamlet has from two to seven or eight houses, each one having its communal cooking ground and generally a cook house also, for use on rainy days. With the exception of the very small ones, a hamlet has its own cemetery and men's house.

The society is agricultural. Gardening, fishing, hunting wild pigs, and cooking are the main everyday occupations. Trading is important and carried on according to exact and traditional rules. The familiar Melanesian gift-exchange is also practiced.

Frequency of Feasts

After living in this society for only a short time, one is impressed by the great frequency of feasts. The following is a list of occasions on which they are held.

Occasion	Name
Pregnancy	ɑnɪng asɪl tsɛgɣ (eating for infant)
Birth	Grɪmɣsi (name of dance performed by women at this rite)
Giving name to infant	Basisis (name)
Several months after birth if infant is strong	ɑnɪng asɪl wɤtwɤt tsegɣ (eating for strong infant)

5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

which he walked up and down singing and talking. He gave once more the reason for the feast, said they had now "marked" all the pigs, and then made a few more remarks about the size of the animals and the number of men present.

Finally, each man makes a rude coconut-leaf basket in which he carries home the remains of his food. But before they leave, the men carefully clean the cemetery and throw all debris into the sea, near which the cemetery is always placed. Not a scrap of food nor any other refuse, such as a leaf "plate," remains, the cemetery being left in the same neat condition that it was in before the feast. This work done, hands are washed in the sea (the sea as a finger bowl is one of its many uses for the native), and then the men drift away singly or in small groups, each carrying his basket with the remains of the food.

Reciprocity Between Moieties

This ritual feast, held on all occasions of importance to the individual or to society, is also frequently the time when the principle of reciprocity between both moieties and localities is seen in full play.

At the feminine feasts, such as pregnancy, birth, first menstruation, and marriage, where there is a distribution of food, the women of the Eagle moiety bring taro which is given to the women of the Hawk moiety, and the women of the Hawk moiety likewise bring taro which in turn is given to the women of the Eagle moiety. This exchange is never omitted. The Eagle women bring their taro, prepare it for baking, and then place it in the liga themselves. They do not forget just where their bundles have been placed. Removing them from the liga, they give them to the women of the Hawk moiety, who do likewise to the women of the Eagle moiety. The taro is of course all exactly the same and prepared in the same fashion, so that one gets exactly what one has given. But it is the ritual exchange between the moieties that is important. At some feasts uncooked taro is exchanged. At the feast, when the men eat, this act of reciprocity does not take place among them: the food is opened up in the cemetery and the taro is distributed regardless of moiety.

Reciprocity Between Villages

It is the uncooked taro that is most often the object of exchange between the women of different villages at intervillage feasts—usually mortuary and malanggon ones. Sometimes the exchange does not always take place at the one feast. The women of Lesu may go to a feast at Ambwa, three miles away, and receive much taro. At a later time the women of Ambwa will come to a similar feast at Lesu and receive taro as a return gift.